GDP. The National Health Policy, 2002 also envisages increasing the health expenditure by Government as a percentage of GDP from the existing 0.9% to 2.0% by 2010. Government has been making every effort to augment the resources for health sector by mobilizing external assistance by various bilateral and multilateral agencies for supporting various National Disease Control Programmes. Health infrastructure in certain States is also being upgraded with World Bank assistance. The Tenth Plan Outlay for Central Health Sector has been fixed at Rs. 9253 crore compared to Rs. 5118 crore during the Ninth Plan.

Illegal abortions

1159. SHRI RAVULA CHANDRA SEKAR REDDY: Will the Minister of HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that for each registered legal abortion, there are at least eleven illegal abortions;

(b) whether Government have analysed why so many women prefer to by-pass the legal route;

(c) if so, the details thereof; and

(d) the action taken to provide all needy women adequate, safe and human services such as health care, pre-natal care, child care and reliable contraception?

THE MINISTER OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE (SHRIMATI SUSHMA SWARAJ): (a) No reliable data exists on the incidence of registered legal abortion *vis-a-vis* illegal abortion in India. The Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) in 1983-85 carried out a study in five States of India, *i.e.* Haryana, Orissa, Rajasthan, Tamil Nadu and Uttar Pradesh. The extent of illegal abortion was 13.3 per 1000 pregnancies compared to legal abortion, which were 6.1 per 1000 pregnancies.

(b) and (c) Reasons for unsafe (illegal) abortions include: lack of information/knowledge about availability of services and about dangers of unsafe abortions; Social values, prejudice, and stigma attached to abortion, decision making by the head of the family and not by the pregnant woman; as yet, insufficient infrastructure and lack of trained manpower and/or equipment lack of privacy/confidentiality and shortage of approved MTP clinics due to delays in recognition of private clinics.

(d) Under the onging Reproductive and Child Health (RCH) Programme, efforts are being made to increase availability and accessibility to safe abortion services by providing MTP equipment and undertaking need-based training to assist States in making MTP facilities available at Primary Health Center level. Funds are also being provided to the States for hiring services of private doctors trained in MTP techniques for visiting Primary Health Centres/Community Health Centres periodically. Information, Education and Communication and counselling services are also provided.

To cut down the delays in approval of private MTP Clinics, the MTP Act-1971, has been amended as recently as December 2002, wherein the authority to approve clinics has been decentralized to the districts.

Manual Vacuum Aspiration (MVA), a simple and safe technique for termination of early pregnancy at PHC level has been made part of the programme. A Pilot Project on MVA technique is now being implemented in sixteen districts of eight selected States to study the feasibility for expanding the same to the rest of the country.

On the recommendation of ICMR, Drug Controller of India has permitted the use of Oral Abortion Pills for termination of early pregnancies with the provision that these pills will be sold only on prescription of an expert (Gynaecologist) and used in hospitals/institutions with backup facilities for blood transfusion and MTP services.

Contraceptive services are being provided as part of the Family Welfare Programme free of cost to people in the reproductive age group.

Maternal Health, pre-natal care and child care integral components of the Reproductive and Child Health Programme being implemented in all States and Union territories of the country. For pregnant women, the interventions include essential obstetric care, emergency obstetric care, provision of referral transport through Panchayats and provision of drugs and equipments at first referral units. The interventions for children include Immunization against six vaccine preventable diseases, control of deaths due to diarrhea and acute respiratory infections, iron deficiency, anemia and essential newborn care.